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CONTENTS

LAVENDER

FEATURE: OUR HOMES

42 Habitation Furnishings + Design

48 Fall Parade of Homes

56 Renter's Warehouse: Q&A

60 Master Suite Panache

SPECIAL SECTION:

32 Lav.fash

OUR LAVENDER

12 From the Editor

14 A Word in Edgewise

16 Lavender Lens

18 Lavender Lens

19 Lavender Lens

67 Lavender Lens

OUR SCENE

20 Arts: Spotlight

24 Eat the Menu: Il Foro

30 Sports: TCGSL

40 Barometer

41 Bar Showcase

OUR HOMES

64 Ride Review

OUR RESOURCES

70 The Network

71 Classifieds

72 Community Connection

OUR VOICES

68 Dateland

74 Through These Eyes

32



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ON THE COVER

Your Fall Home & Garden plans require the Fall Parade of Homes and Remodelers Showcase. Photo courtesy of Vujovich Design Build

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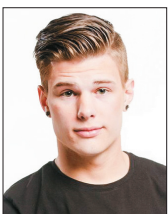
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Fall Nostalgia

I'm sitting at the kitchen table in my cabin, just outside of Merri-field, Minnesota, in the Brainerd Lakes area. It's about 62 degrees, the sun is out, the birds are singing, my dog is at my foot. The structure is rustic, but the Wi-Fi is better than what I get at home in my loft in St. Paul. There's a hummingbird at the feeder. The antiques that cover the walls and surfaces aren't necessarily here to pull together a shabby chic décor as much as because there are so many family members who use this cabin, there is no way to determine who owns what in order to remove anything. We're one of the fortunate families that shares a property that was built by my great grandparents between all the descendants. My Gramma Ruby's family splits the summer between the two other siblings' families. Time is shared, costs are shared, chores are shared, space is shared, décor is shared.

I look around and all I see that is missing is a striped wool blanket. You know, that iconic cream-colored wool blanket with just-darker-than-usual primary color stripes? It's been a blanket, it's been turned into a toggle coat, it's even been made into handbags. But I am interested in the blanket, itself. It looks like fall to me. Or, something to wrap up in on the beach at night as the summer sun goes down and the fire burns brighter. What is it about that look that has stuck in my design craw all these years? It's both trendy and lasting.

It's referred to as a Hudson's Bay wool blanket by Woolrich, a Glacier National Park wool blanket by Pendleton, and a Revival Stripe wool blanket by the Faribault Woolen Mills. I prefer to pay attention to our local company in Faribault and how the company reopened The Mill along the Cannon River after a two-year closure in 2011 and the Revival Stripe was the first release, though the traditional trapper design had been part of the line for decades. What a wonderful choice of design for reentering the market, for a renaissance. And what a wonderful fall daytrip it would be to venture down to Faribault to pick out a flagship Revival Stripe blanket from The Mill Store, itself.

Also in the fiber of my nostalgic being is a wooden boat. Not a rowboat, not even a stunning wooden canoe, but a sleek wooden motorboat. I'm going to try to make it to some of the Antique & Classic Boat Society's International Boat Show, a full week of curated events that kicks off with some of the world's most coveted classic boats hitting Lake Minnetonka on September 19 for a preview event. After Minnetonka, boat enthusiasts (I'm going to count myself as an enthusiast) can venture north for the official program, but I will probably try to make it to the competitive boat show held Friday and Saturday, Sept. 25 and 26, at the docks of Bar Harbor on Gull Lake. It's a free event where we can enjoy music, food, and drinks while viewing more than 150 classic boats. For more information go to www.woodsandwater2015.org.

Speaking of water, another idea for a fall home and garden field trip is to go over to Stockholm, Wisconsin, and visit Alan and Steve at Abode. They've redone the place and I love strolling through it to see new art and décor resources and pieces. My favorite fall afternoon thing to do is make a trip around Lake Pepin for the colors. Clockwise or

counterclockwise, the experience is superb. The last time I made the trek, I got to Stockholm mid-afternoon and checked out the new layout on the main drag with Abode and the General Store flanking a new, enlarged space for the Stockholm Pie Company with expanded seating and menu. It's a destination, for sure. Then, after getting our fill, we proceeded south to Pepin for an early seating at Harbor View Cafe where I got my usual, the Berkshire Pork Shank, which is so very tangy and fallish. Hearty and filling, the food on the waterfront reminds me of a satellite location of our cabin, with

more knotty pine and blue checkered tablecloths.

This Fall Home & Garden Issue with Lav.fash is a timely resource for those who are considering design, building, fashion, and trends. The upcoming Fall Parade of Homes and Remodelers Showcase (p. 48) allows you to walk through what can be thought-provoking and inspirational, or simply entertaining (see also the number of ads in this issue for other home tours). The new store, Habitation Furnishing + Design (p. 42), in St. Louis Park, had me Instagramming and swooning over things for my loft, such as a light fixture made of black top hats. It also had me wondering if anyone would notice if I somehow spirited the updated and lower-

profile version of a Murphy bed into my Jeep (that Cabinetbed with the Tempur-Pedic mattress belongs at my place). John Mark and Kyle Lieberman treat us to the fall installment of Lav.fash (p. 22) which includes more Minnesota brands and styles to whet your appetite for Fashion Week Minnesota September 20-26 (read more at www.fashionweekmn.com).

We've got a few months before the snow flies. Get out more, see more, experience more. You'll have plenty of time to spend at home once winter hits, take the time right now to make it as comfortable and appealing as you can, with a heavy dose of nostalgia or not.

With you and with thanks, ■



Andy



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Wielding the Cross: Religiosity or Grandiosity?

Rowan County, Kentucky, county clerk Kim Davis refuses to issue marriage licenses to same-sex applicants as the law now requires, nor will she allow others in her office to issue any marriage licenses. Davis is elected; she can't be fired, she won't resign.

Davis cites her "Christian faith and constitutional right to religious freedom" as reasons to deny others' civil rights, although a civil license has no religious component, implies no endorsement of the licensed activity, certifying only that the provided information is correct. Davis could have another clerk sign for her, but remains adamant, disrupting lives and incurring thousands in legal fees through her failed appeals. Why? Cui bono? Who benefits

Is Davis backed by some right-wing political cabal seeking to showcase alleged religious discrimination? Is she looking to attain some personal (and widely publicized) Christian martyrdom? Davis wouldn't have been a blip on the national consciousness if she'd informed her staff, "I'm not signing any marriage licenses for gays. One of y'all sign if we have to."

Answering one of Davis's several appeals, Judge David L. Bunning of the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Kentucky asked, "Does


the First Amendment likely excuse Kim Davis from issuing marriage licenses because she has a religious objection to same-sex marriage? ... The Court answers this question in the negative."

Her high-handed, arrogant behavior would have flown back in the day. Until 1967, Davis could have, with impunity, denied marriage licenses to mixed-race couples, cherry-picking Bible quotes as she pleased, knowing everyone white would have her back. But the social climate has changed, and, however erratically, is tending toward insuring equal rights for every United States citizen.

As we go to press, Davis's appeal to SCOTUS has been denied. On September 3, she was escorted to the Carter County Detention Center (KY), where she is, at this writing, listed as an inmate. On September 4, eight couples, including six same-sex, requested and received marriage licenses.

Unwittingly on the right side of history back in February, Davis had issued a license to transman Camryn Colen and his partner, not checking that his birth certificate identified him as female. Commented Colen, "She saw just a straight couple in love and she should see everybody like that."

Cui bono? ■



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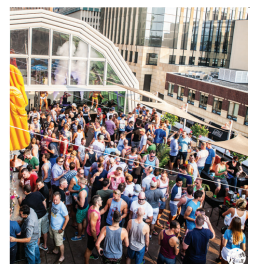
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French filmmaker, theorist, critic, and novelist Jean Epstein (1897–1953) was born into a time of revolutionary technological change in the early years of film. He was an assistant to Auguste Lumiere, one of the seminal figures in early film innovation. He also knew the aesthetic realms of Dada, surrealism, and futurism which freed up the linearity of the human mind of that time and threw rules of art out the window. It comes as no surprise that one of the barrier-breaking Epstein films,

Double Love (1925), is about gambling compulsion with homosexual undercurrents. It sometimes comes as a surprise to people that such concepts happened way back then, but indeed, silent films and talkies into the 1930s often coded queerness into their content. In the U.S., the Hays Code put the brakes on films that were deemed too risqué, hence queerness and what was thought of as explicit sexuality, got cut considerably, if not, unconstitutionally.

Double Love (Le Double amour) plays Oct. 24 as part of the Walker Art Center's eagerly awaited Jean Epstein series. His innovative approach can be seen in all films screened, from the low camera angles and misty effects of his take on Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* to merry-go-round effects in *Faithful Heart* to hallucinogenic effects in *End of the Earth*. And others. The is truly an "I can't wait!" film series.

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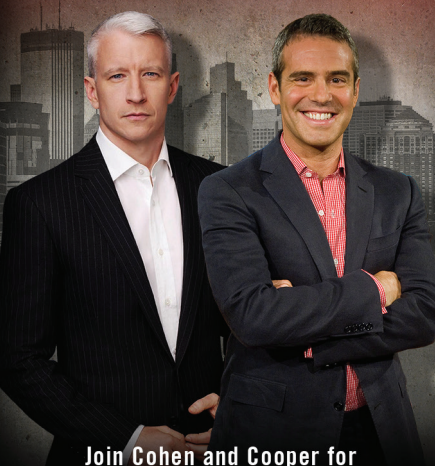
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Kellen Blair and Joe Kinosian's musical is not ordinary. Randy Reyes directs Nic Delcambre as a small-town policeman investigating a crime. Andrea Wollenberg plays all the suspects. Music director Stephen Houtz shares, "This is a great piece to work on because it's not like any other piece I've music-directed: the actors sing — one of them sings about ten roles — and they play piano both for themselves and for each other. There is no orchestra, and the piano becomes like another character in the show. It's been a lot of fun coaching the two performers as both pianist and singer. A lot of the music is really clever. Not only are there musical jokes, but ways that the piano responds to what is going on onstage. And there are the moments of real virtuosity for both of the performers. Andrea has to sing a duet with herself *and* accompany at the same time!"

THE SLOW MOTION CARNIVAL

Oct. 9-25

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www.redeyetheater.org

Director Steve Busa and playwright Katharine Sherman are using the play-within-a-play approach in a new work inspired by Jean Luc Godard's 1963 film breakthrough, *Contempt*, as a way to take a contemporary look at August Strindberg's dramatic 19th century classic of desire and domination, *Miss Julie*. Moreover, it involves a screenwriter who is hired to make the script commercially appealing. Unfortunately, the writer's own relationship is on the rocks and gives mixed signals to the actors. Busa

*The Slow Motion Carnival.* Photo by Liz Josheff


shares, "Most plays present substitute worlds that fit our desires. This piece, though, with all its levels, has interlocking worlds that challenge our desires."

**100+: A PHOTOGRAPH
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If you like the photography exhibits you visit to be eclectic and far-flung in their subject matter, then go to the Minneapolis Institute of Art (newly rebranded from the MIA to Mia). Their Harrison Photography Gallery features photos for every year of the first-rate museum's 100 years of existence. This centennial celebration gives us twins by Diane Arbus and Richard Avedon's famous image of General and President Dwight D. Eisenhower in retirement in his 70s. Relish photos of gay men's icon, Mae West, by Ray Muxter and one of a German soldier in 1945 by August Sanders that emanates the shame of the Third Reich's downfall as felt by an ordinary man.

The human form is honored in Ruth Bernhard's interracial *Two Forms* and Andre Kertesz's hauntingly sensual *Underwater Swimmer*. The exhibit also includes images by JoAnn Verberg, Catherine Opie, and a major figure in the photography of Native Americans, Edward S. Curtis. And like any commendable photo retrospective primarily based in the 20th century, *100+* contains work by nature celebrant, Ansel Adams. While at Mia, have a look at their newly acquired Vincent Van Gogh painting, *Irises*. ■

*100+: A Photograph For Every Year of Mia.* Photo by Ramon J. Muxter



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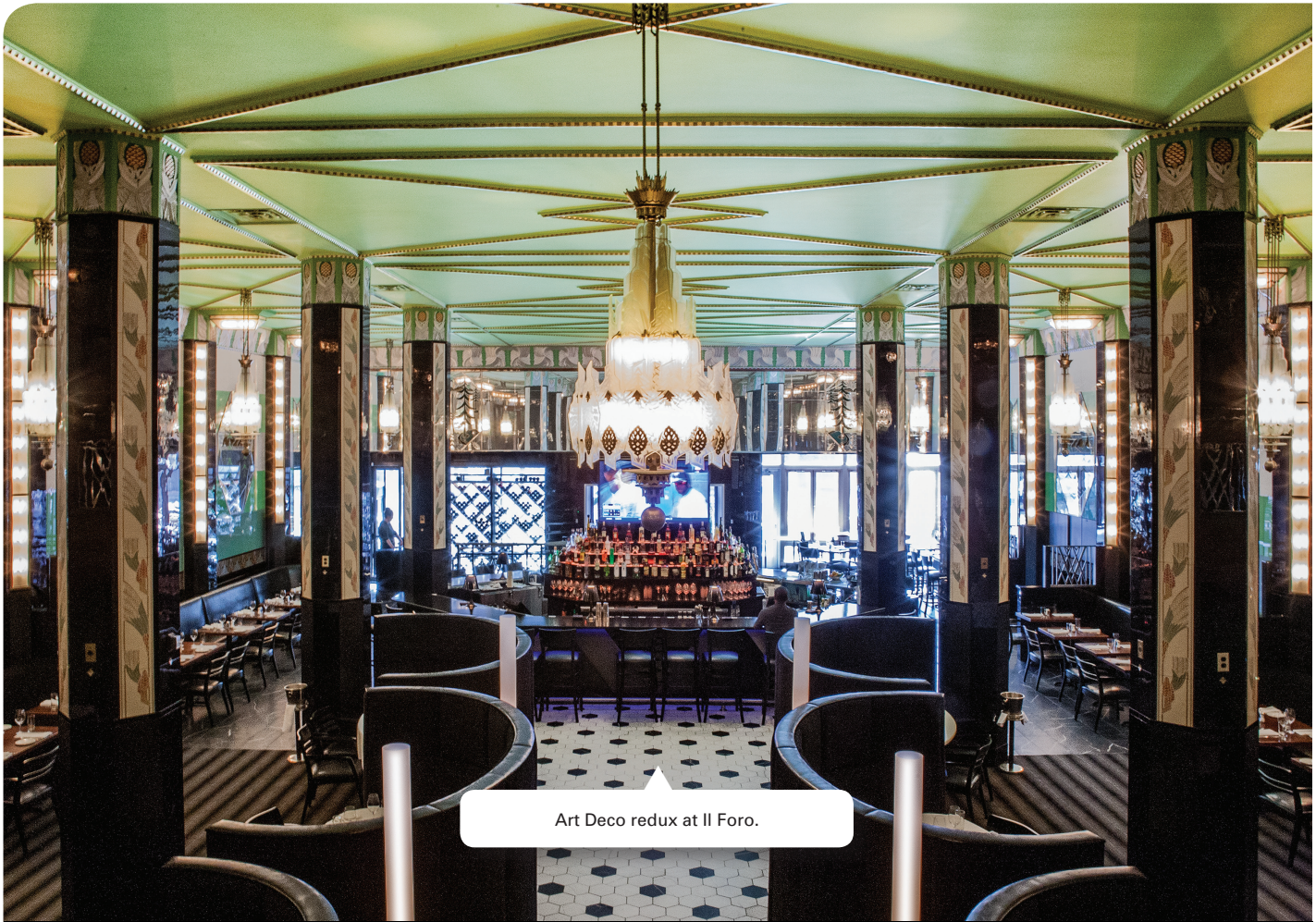
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Art Deco redux at Il Foro.

Choir Boy. Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp

Il Foro

I've been exploring my Italian roots lately through food. Lies. I have no Italian roots. I grew up eating pasta from a can and thought my aunt, Kay, was super fancy the way she pronounced it 'EYEtalian.' Times have changed. I can now tell the difference between tortellini and tortelloni. And my current food tour of Italy is nowhere near an Olive Garden. It's still EYEtalian, though, but that's for Aunt Kay.

And, boy, would Aunt Kay be impressed with all the fancy Italian food in Minneapolis. Last month, you might remember, I dove headfirst into Parella in Calhoun Square. Remember the whole wheat spaghetti with parsley pesto and that cool, creamy panna cotta?

This month, I had the pleasure of finally dining at Il Foro in downtown Minneapolis.

Just as Parella was born out of the ashes of another great restaurant from Minneapolis history, Figlio, Il Foro, too, has a lineage to be proud of. And in awe of. The now temple to modern Italian cooking was origi-

nally built in 1914 as a theater, later becoming the storied Forum Cafeteria and a host of other restaurants through the years.

Walking through the bedazzled Deco doors of Il Foro one late summer Friday afternoon, I was blown away at the interior.

Before you take your seat, wander around the place and soak up all the delicious décor. Seriously, your eyes will get just as much a feast as your appetite.

We started with the tomato cucumber salad. Sounds simple, but there is a lot happening in this bowl. The fresh, peeled tomatoes and crunchy cucumber sit atop a green gazpacho with dollops of pecorino fresco. A spoonful and you'll swear summer just happened in your mouth. Summer on the Mediterranean.

On to the bruschetta. You've never eaten a bruschetta like this. This is not Costco bruschetta. It's not even fancy Italian market chichi bruschetta. It is a defies-description-even-though-I'll-try-and-describe-it



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bruschetta. Chanterelle mushrooms snuggled into the richest, creamiest nonlivery liver mousse you've had. Smear a bit of the neighboring taleggio fondue and huckleberry preserves onto your bite and, bam, all the flavors. At once.

Everybody who's anybody has a crudo. Il Foro has three and we had the tuna. This finger lime-topped tuna crudo swimming in tomatillo and avocado crema is the perfect palette brightener.

When it comes to the pasta, you expect greatness at the place that prides itself on "a modern approach to classic Italian cooking." Lucky you, you'll get greatness at Il Foro. The red wine rigatoni was creamy, salty, and perfectly peppery. I ate the entire dish myself.

The tortellini with a bolognese filling were swimming in a chicken and parmesan broth that you'll wish you had a great big soup bowl of.

The parmesan agnolotti with sweet corn and summer truffle was the table favorite. The contrast of the rich and creamy sauce with the fresh bite of summer sweet corn was memorable. As in, I still remember it. As in, I think about it every day.

Not that we needed a main course, we went with the block cut New

York strip, topped with a sweet corn raviolo. Seriously, can you ever get enough of fresh summer sweet corn? Do I even need to ask the question? Any time you see corn on Il Foro's menu from now on, order it.

We ended the meal with a dessert I have to believe will soon become an Il Foro classic, if it hasn't already. The chocolate olive oil cake, filled with an EVOO caramel, sits on a wonderfully tart, zesty passion fruit purée. Get it, split it, or hoard it all to your lonesome. And there's olive oil in it, so it's heart healthy. Hey look, healthy dessert! Bonus points, Il Foro!

I can't recommend Il Foro highly enough. I walked away from my table happier than when I walked in. That's a huge indication I'll be back. And you should too. Executive Chef Joe Rolle and the entire Il Foro team have taken a beautiful, historic space and festooned it with a friendly ambience and food that lives up to their mission. Best darn EYEtalian food I've had in a long time. ■

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Nine Twin Cities Teams Compete in Gay Softball World Series



Photos by Triquetra Productions/Larry Barthel

The 2015 Gay Softball World Series (GSWS) was held from August 18–August 22 in Columbus, Ohio, and, as usual, the Twin Cities Good-time Softball League (TCGSL) represented the state of Minnesota with spirit, fun, and trophy-winning play. Overall, 183 teams competed in the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Association (NAGAAA) World Series, making it the largest GSWS ever.

Nine teams from the TCGSL made the trek to Columbus to take part in the games. The 2015 World Series featured the return of an A Division team (the highest division in gay softball) from Minnesota. The TC Frostbite were one of only ten teams that competed at the A

Level. The team finished seventh, which met their expectations for being a first-year A team.

The B Division was represented by three teams: Freak, Insanity, and Steel. All three B teams played well, with the Freak advancing the furthest in the double elimination tournament, playing in games on “Championship Saturday.”

The C Division Big Gay Moose, sponsored by www.biggaynews.com, were the sole trophy winners from the TCGSL. The Moose rolled into Championship Saturday before being eliminated by the Seattle Maulers. Overall the Moose bring back a fourth place trophy to Minnesota. The Force and a team new to the TCGSL, the Crush, were the other C Division

representatives. Both the Force and the Crush won in bracket play before being eliminated.

The D Division featured two teams from the Twin Cities: the Hot Rods and the Racers. Both teams played with heart and had several wins in the bracket play before being eliminated.

Overall, the TCGSL teams played well. More importantly, the TCGSL teams turned out to cheer on their fellow teams whenever possible. Chants of “Minn-e-so-ta” and “Ya, You Betcha, Ya Ya You Betcha” echoed throughout the fields. It is no understatement to say the TCGSL members represent like no other league in NAGAAA. Congratulations to all teams on a great season! ■



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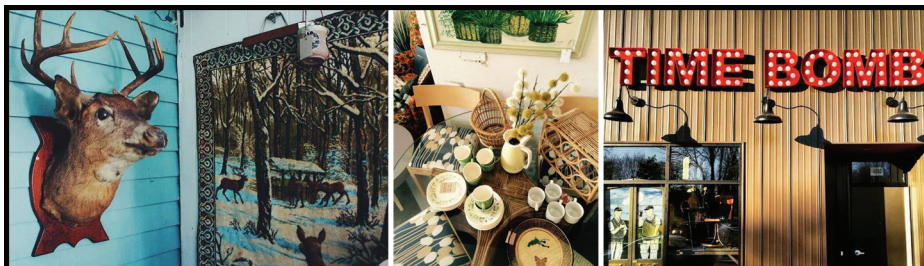
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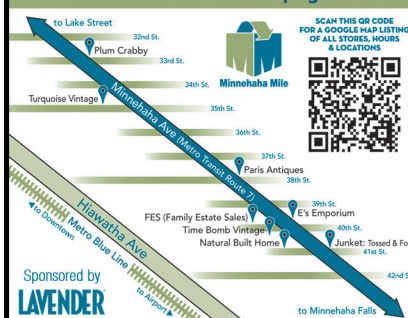


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from Showroom

On Sam

Vince shirt and sweater from
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shoes, **Woodchuck USA** journal



On Sam

J. Crew shirt, **Freenote** jacket from MartinPatrick3, **Lucky** jeans, **Rag & Bone** bag, **Florsheim** loafers

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Jeffrey has always marched to the beat of his own drum. One day, you may find him at a concert for a local metal band, and the next day, you'll see him browsing for another suit at the mall. However, you'll usually see him at home making small talk with his cat, playing today's popular video game, or trying to write a follow-up to his self-published novel.

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5 QUESTIONS WITH DJ MONSIEUR ADI

STORY BY JOHN MARK • PHOTOGRAPHY BY YAZON LO • STYLING BY LISA MARIE
GHERARDINI • HAIR & MAKEUP BY KRISTINE LOHERER • SPECIAL THANKS MARTINPATRICK3

For the past few years, Monsieur Adi has been hiding in plain sight. Many are surprised to find that the producer of official remixes for Lana Del Rey, Beyoncé, Bastille, Britney Spears, Seal, and many more, prefers working from the comfort of his Twin Cities apartment. Regardless of being signed to Sony Music, one of the largest companies in the business, space to breathe is a priority for the French-born artist. We were lucky enough to catch Monsieur Adi a couple days before he set off for Milan, his favorite destination for both work and play. After a quick shoot by the grace of MartinPatrick3, we grabbed a drink at the Monte Carlo to chat music, travel, and life.

What are you the most excited about right now?

Monsieur Adi: I am excited about making the transition from producer for pop stars to being my own artist and making my own universe come to life. I am transitioning into my own artist. When I am working for other people, I am trying to be as respectful as possible to their image and aesthetic. You have labels to please, you have management to please, the artist to please, but with my own music... it's just me. I can go super dark if I want to. I can go super sensual if I want to, without inhibition. It's very much a freedom.

Did you grow up in a musical home?

MA: Yes. My Dad played the trumpet and my Mom was a singer in her spare time, but my brother was the musical one. He can play the cello, tuba, piano, violin, drums, everything. Being the competitive person I am, I thought, *If he can do it, I can do it, too.* So I taught myself to play the piano by ear. My Mom said, "If you're playing the piano, we want it to sound good." So I took piano lessons, and violin lessons, and was in choir, but the intent was never to become a musician. Ever. [laughs]

Do you remember a specific moment when you realized that the DJ/producer career path was a real and tangible thing?

MA: Well I started in architecture and fashion design, studying first in Paris, then a year in Milan, which was great. Milan was where I met

my first boyfriend. [laughs] Anyway, my friend came to me and said, "I have these demos." I just decided to remix them for whatever reason. I don't know why, I just did it. He said, "Let's do a few more." I said "No, let's just make a whole album." I was super ambitious. I started entering remix competitions, not with intent to win, just to get more familiar with working with different artists and putting things together. So, I won one... after being interviewed by a blogger who worked for the Grammys, I started to get a lot more work and it started to come with money. While I had still been thinking about fashion design, it became clear that I needed to choose one [career] or the other. I said, "Music is fun." I'm a very impatient person and I like the instant gratification of hearing what I'm working on immediately. I sort of realized at that point, that this could be something. It turned out my intuition was right.

What have been some of your best travel memories?

MA: Towards the end of my tour with Beyoncé, we were tired and had just finished a show in Antwerp, and the plan was to drive from Antwerp to Barcelona on the tour bus, a fifteen- or eighteen-hour drive. On the drive, I slept all the way through France and when we arrived in Barcelona, we had two days off. I don't know what it was, but I felt so relaxed, almost in a spiritual way. Barcelona was super magical and the show... it was the most memorable. To see 24,000 people going mad to my remix, jumping up and down, screaming, going crazy, I had to take it all in.

What have you noted about the differences between different GLBT communities in your travels?

MA: Paris, like any major city, is very progressive, though it's a little smaller. There's no section, like New York's Chelsea, but it's a nice place for the GLBT community. Moscow is a different story. I've always been afraid of Russia, just in general. While I was there on tour, the club promoter that was showing me around pointed out places that were burnt down, just because they were a gay establishment. He was very calm about it, so I felt... not like my life was in danger, but an extra uneasiness. Would I go there again? I don't know. ■

OUR SCENE

BAR & CLUBS | BAROMETER | BY GEORGE HOLDGRAFER

Anastasia C. Principle Captures Miss Toast of the Town House Title

On the evening of August 29, the 2015 Toast of the Town House Pageant took place at the St. Paul bar. The theme was “Disney.” Emceed by Lily White, Pumps & Pearls Show Director, the event drew a large crowd.

Six contestants competed for the coveted title: Sasha Giselle Carter, Tonia Lee Richards, Anastasia C. Principle, Anastacia Rose, BJ Holly, and Alana Chapelle. The categories were theme wear, talent, evening gown, and question and answer.

In a close contest, Anastasia C. Principle captured the coveted crown. She will represent the Town House throughout her reign. First runner-up was Anastacia Rose. Second runner-up was Tonia Lee Richards.

Dotti West, stepping-down Miss Toast of the Town House 2014, performed several numbers, as did other past titleholders, including Anastasia (2005), Dra Matica (2007), Kaydance (2008), Eileen Dover (2010), Mercedes Iman (2011), and Brandonna Dupri LaReese (2013).

The Pumps & Pearls Drag Revue is the featured entertainment every Wednesday night at the Town House, St. Paul’s oldest GLBT bar, which marks its 46th anniversary this fall. ■



Miss Toast of the Town House 2015, Anastasia C. Principle (left), and Emcee Lily White. Photo by George Holdgrafer

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HOME & GARDEN

FALL

BY SHANE LUECK



Pretty in Pink: White lacquer cabinet with mirrored top and studs (\$1221), Zaria soldier (\$69), handcrafted rose vase (\$59), pink glass jar (\$19), hot pink heels books, set of 4 (\$149), hot pink and black heels books, set of 4 (\$149), watercolor paintings (\$159 each). Photo by Mike Hnida

HABITATION BY DESIGN

Anyone looking to update their space need look no further than the two giant Great Danes flanking the entrance to Habitation Furnishing + Design. The two guard dog sculptures welcome onlookers and lure you into the storefront “as a gateway drug,” Habitation’s Environment Director Michelle Havens jokes.

All jokes aside, the dogs are only a glimmer of the treasures awaiting design hopefuls inside. As the environment director, Havens works to ensure that everyone who enters Habitation’s doors

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44 ➔

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1. Statement Dining Table: Chamcha wood dining table (\$5509), black seatbelt dining chairs (\$659 each), skinny female sculpture (\$1329), root bowl (\$1209), galvanized circle tiles, various colors (\$109 each), silver leaf circle tiles, set of 4 (\$379). 2. Spectacular Small Spaces: Cabinet bed with queen size Tempur-Pedic mattress (\$2839), pharmacy desk lamp (\$138), large geographic teal vase (\$99), tall navy vase with gold trim (\$48), short navy vase with gold trim (\$42). Photos by Mike Hnida

feels as if they are beginning a new adventure. From the warm welcome, to the visual excitement, to the educational aspect of products, Havens and the rest of the team have you covered.

The name of the showroom and design company is certainly not a misnomer. If you were to look up “habitation” in the dictionary, you would find “the state or process of living in a particular place, (formal) a place in which to live.” Havens and the rest of the

team work with you to turn your house into a home.

Habitation offers a mid-century modern vibe with a dash of organic contemporary, industrial chic, and glam thrown in. “It’s all about creating a showroom that is exciting and fresh, yet approachable and realistic in terms of livability,” Havens says. “We feel comfortable placing a mid-century sofa next to a steel and stone side table. Or taking something as timeless as a Chesterfield frame and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46 ➔

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“We provide tablets to customers who can use them to scan QR codes on price tags to access third party reviews and compare prices with online retailers,”

pairing it with a modern glass coffee table and shaggy white rug. This is how people live today. They collect items for their home over a lifetime, items that they love, and the end result is an interesting home with an eclectic style truly all their own.”

With the variety of furniture styles and options available, Habitation focuses on quality and design; after all, trends are passing while style endures. “That’s really how you pull off a blended look,” Havens says. “You evaluate individual pieces in the context of the moment and bring them together. As long as you understand certain interior design principles, the result is eclectically cool.”

Of course, in this day and age, Habitation doesn’t just operate as a showroom for design inspiration. Havens says they are catering to a generation that isn’t just tech savvy; they live and breathe technology. Habitation is a new generation of retailer, embracing the shoppers who research products online at home for hours before making a purchase.

“We provide tablets to customers who can use them to scan QR codes on price tags to access third party reviews and compare prices with online retailers,” Havens says, noting that Habitation matches most online prices. “The tablets connect wirelessly to 65-inch monitors so the customers and designers can ‘cast’ products to the screens without having to huddle over some paper design catalog.”

Habitation is even working with local apartment and condominium buildings to index their floor plans by unit so that residents can see immediately whether a particular piece will fit in their home. Not to mention there’s a projector screen that can show special-order items in actual size.

With all of these options to view furniture and designs in your space, how do you decide which pieces are for you? According to Havens, it’s all about what speaks to you. “Make a space your own,” she says. “We’re here to help you bring it all together if you’d like, but when you look around your space, it should be filled with pieces that bring you joy. Ignore the constraints of classification and make your own statement.”

Habitation’s founder and chief curator, Greg Rich, selected vendors based on their style, quality, uniqueness, and value. From there, the Habitation team worked with the vendors to pick pieces that represented what they’re all about. Then, the team considered what would work in the Minnesota market. “Because of our unique vendors and styles, there was a delicate balance between blending styles, textures, scale, and drama,” Havens says. “And based on this, we were eventually able to define and build our unique showroom.”

A rare aspect of the partnership Habitation has with its vendors is the transparency in pricing. While many retailers go to great lengths to try and hide their supplier identities (either to keep competitors from stealing brands or, more often, to try and keep consumers from comparison shopping), Habitation rejects that completely.

“All of our furniture suppliers are named on the tags, their model numbers are cited, and the price is clearly marked,” Havens says. “We want our customers to leave knowing they got great service and paid the best price possible (we do match most internet prices).”

Habitation is not only a retail showroom, but also a home staging business. With over 15,000 square feet of warehouse space with product immediately available, Karl Peltier, Habitation’s staging director, can make sure to provide you with the most effective styles to ensure your home sells quickly and easily. Whether you are interested in a complete staging, a photo styling session or

simply renting product, Habitation offers a variety of solutions to meet your staging needs.

Ultimately, Havens says, life should be fun. Furniture should make you feel good. “At Habitation, we love to get to know our clients on a personal level, allowing us to truly understand what their needs might be for their home,” she says. “We value the experience you have when you walk in our door, and we do our best to create an inviting place you feel comfortable being a part of. Whether you want a ‘tour’ through the shop, or you would like a walk-through on your own, we are here every step of the way.”

FRESH FALL DESIGN TRENDS

Of course, when it comes to design advice, Havens and her team have that in spades. Up to date on all of the trends, the staff at Habitation is able to advise you on how to make the classic and the trendy fit into your decor scheme. Here, Havens offers four design trends for fall and how to best incorporate them into your space.

What’s happening on walls?

Wallpaper is making a huge comeback! But before you start groaning about all of the hassle that comes with it, the best possible solution is Tempaper. Tempaper is a temporary self-adhesive wallpaper allowing you to actually embrace this upcoming trend with a vengeance! Whether your style is traditional, modern, or glam, Tempaper will make a bold statement in any room, on any wall or mantle. And when you are ready to change your look, simply peel off like a sticky note. No scraping, chemicals, or heat needed.

Spectacular Small Spaces

Maximizing your space is not only one of the most on-trend things of the season, it is an ongoing way-of-life for a lot of people. Utilizing the extra room in the house with a dual function, such as an office-turned-guest room, can often lead to visual disappointment as well as a non-functioning space. The Cabinetbed is the most cutting-edge use of space: not only is it an attractive piece consuming a small footprint of your home, it is an incredibly functional and highly comfortable TempurPedic bed for your guests.

Pretty in Pink

Pink is still all the rage this fall. Combined with a little glam, you have a hot combination of fabulously pretty. If you love the idea but you can’t make the commitment, bring in the color subtly, with art, and pull out the punches of color in a bolder way, through accessories. Leave your core pieces of furniture neutral and, when you are ready for the next color trend or style, simply swap out accessories.

Statement Dining Tables

Go bold this season with stunning dining room table designs. Nothing makes your house feel like a home more than a dinner party with friends, family, and good wine. “Finding a dining table that you love and yet represents your style can sometimes be a challenge, but at Habitation, we are happy to come to your home and help you make the best decision for your space and lifestyle,” says David Borgula, director of interior design. ■

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HOME & GARDEN

FALL

BY SHANE LUECK



Archways and beams operate as "ceiling candy," adding extra dimension to the space and drawing the eye upward. Photo courtesy of Kootenia Homes

NEW AND REMODELED INSPIRATION AT THE PARADE OF HOMES

"Welcome to the Fall Parade of Homes and Remodelers Showcase, where you're sure to find #YourDreamHome."


So reads the home page for the Parade of Homes website, and, truthfully, it's not a lie if you do it right. This year, parade goers are given the opportunity to tour 390 new homes from September 12–October 4 and 63 remodeled homes October 2–4. With that sheer number of homes available, there is no doubt that there's something for everyone.

Even if you're not in the market to buy a home, the design inspiration is enough to spark creativity to update a room in your home. The Parade of Homes recently completed a research study (using exit interviews, focus groups, and phone surveys) to determine why people enjoy the tour. Two clear groups were established: those who go for inspiration to see the latest and most exciting products, features, and designs for homes, often in a luxurious setting; and those who are planning to make a change to their housing situation and see the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50 ➔

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The ceiling beams and dark island bring a touch of rustic chic to this modern space. Photos courtesy of Kootenia Homes

Parade of Homes as a great resource to learn about what's available on the market (prices, neighborhoods, builders).

Wendy Danks, director of marketing and communications for the Parade of Homes reflects on the 67 years the parade has been operating. "Just like Home and Garden TV, Houzz, Pinterest and other social platforms that show photos and videos of homes, the Parade of Homes is all about showing you cool and interesting 'stuff' for homes," she says. "When you tour you actually get to touch and experience the colors, flow, style, and materials in person (the best way to get a real sense of the spaces)."

The Parade of Homes has also been true to its promise: come and see the widest variety of home styles, sizes, prices, and types to tour, with no obligation. It's perfect for those in the early stages of looking for a home to do research about new construction, builders, and of course find a style that works for their family. But it's also perfect for finding that new color to paint your bedroom, a gorgeous lighting fixture that will fit in your dining room, even a new way of arranging furniture to make your room feel bigger. And of course, who doesn't like to visit those million-dollar homes just to see what they're like. The lowest priced home on the tour is \$184,000 and the highest is \$3.7 million, and homes fall everywhere in between.

For first time parade-goers, there are three simple tips to help make it an enjoyable experience. The first, and perhaps most of-



ten overlooked, is to wear comfortable, slip-on shoes with socks. Most homes you visit will ask that you remove your shoes in deference to the home's future owners. Next, be sure to ask questions and imagine yourself living there.

The last tip that Danks gives to newcomers is to use the website (www.paradeofhomes.org) to help narrow your search — filters for price, location, school district, size, and more can help you select just the homes you want to tour. Then


save them to your own Trip Planner (use the log-in at the top left) which can actually route your map between homes. Then when you tour, bring your smartphone or tablet and log into your Trip Planner to take you to each home.

"The people involved in building new homes, and remodeling current homes are truly artisans," Danks says. "They take huge pride in completing a house that will become the center of one family's life. I've been interviewing builders for over 35 years and I've never met anyone who said building homes was just a job — this is their way of leaving their stamp on the world."

Parade-goers should be on the lookout for this year's Dream Homes. In each Parade of Homes event, the parade's charitable arm, the BATC Foundation, selects two-to-four homes that are truly spectacular. Those homes are dubbed Dream Homes (or Dream Remodeled Homes in the Remodelers Showcase), where visitors

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52 ➔

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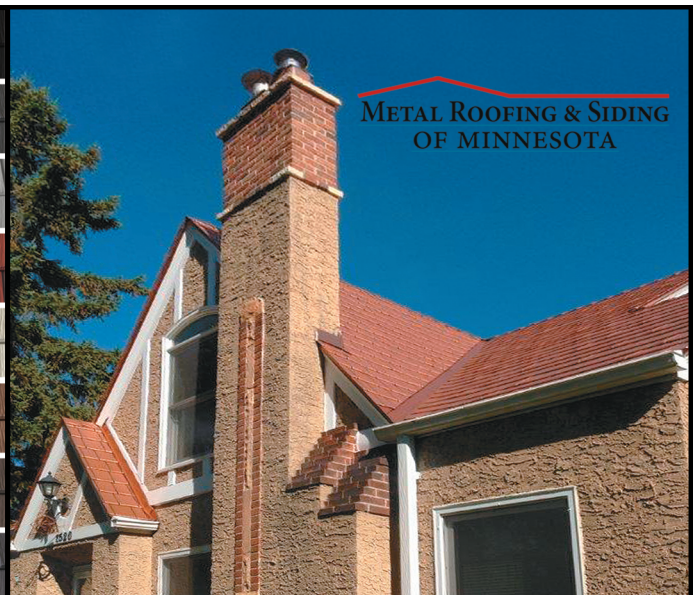
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Mix-and-match wood is a trend seen throughout many homes on the tour. This mix of white cabinets and dark floors add an unexpected touch of panache. Photos courtesy of Crystal Kitchen Center

are asked to pay a charitable donation of \$5 to tour. The proceeds then go toward building and remodeling homes for area families in need — like two current projects: an adaptive new home being built for a wounded Afghanistan war veteran and a major remodeling project to make Bluebird House (a group home where four medically fragile young men live) more comfortable and livable, including adding a family room so all four residents can spend time together in one space.

Of course, every year brings something new to see in terms of layout, décor, colors, styles, etc. But the formula —tour hundreds of homes for free — hasn't changed. This year, the parade is again noting the homes that have a Green PathHome Performance Report (to help visitors understand expected energy use on these homes that have been independently inspected and rated). Unique to this fall, the parade has a focus on outdoor living, and there is a giveaway for a backyard barbecue party for 20, catered by the Rack Shack with a guest appearance by local radio celebrity Brian (BT) Turner.

Parade-goers will note the focus on outdoor spaces with an Outdoor Living Section feature in the guidebook that showcases the latest trends in hardscapes and softscapes from the Builders Association of the Twin Cities' KARE 11 Backyard build partners.



“The fact is, Minnesotans just can't get enough of the great outdoors. With long winter seasons can you blame us?” says Katy Baar, the Parade of Homes style editor. Baar notes that when it comes to homes to tour, the most impressive outdoor spaces can be found at the four Dream Homes, which feature over-the-top outdoor living spaces that are sure to impress.

With most of the homes on the tour for sale, the Parade of Homes is obviously for shopping, but it's also for inspiration. It's easy to incorporate your favorite features into your own home or plan for the day you purchase your dream home. From swapping out décor, to painting your walls, to replacing your kitchen backsplash or updating your light fixtures — there are endless possibilities.

For more in-depth remodeling help, you'll want to tour the Remodelers Showcase. This occurs during the last weekend of the Parade of Homes and allows tour-goers to visit 63 remodeled homes.

Whether it's looking for a new home, remodeling, or you're just looking for some inspiration to update your own space, Baar says you can find inspiration in everything, and make it fit your lifestyle. “Be creative, and know that there are no boundaries or limits,” she says. “Also, I've learned that while certain trends may come and go, the homes on the Parade of Homes are built by some of the best

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54 ➔

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The dark backdrop adds flair in this kitchen that uses shades of gray to create elegance. Photos courtesy of Vujovich Design Build

builders in this industry, with customized finishes and architecture, plus tasteful design that's built with integrity that transcends the test of time."

When it comes to design and décor, Baar recommends you go with what you love. "The Parade of Homes is a great way to discover what you love and allows tour-goers to see multiple styles, price ranges, neighborhoods, and trends," she says. "Mix and match to create your perfect home, and then go with the features you can't live without."



FALL PARADE OF HOMES TRENDS

With 390 new homes on the Fall Showcase, the design trends are vast and the inspiration is endless. Baar notes a few popular concepts you may see a lot of.

Rustic Farmhouse Accents: Up-cycled barnwood or white bead-board used for accent walls. Sliding barn doors are popular and mini versions can sometimes be seen in the family room to hide the TV. Wooden ceiling beams. Farmhouse sinks and rustic accessories. This look pairs nicely with other styles, even contemporary.

Shades of Gray: Still a popular tone, you'll see a lot of gray walls on the Fall Tour. Dark, charcoal/black walls take this trend to another level. The dark walls add drama and flare, plus a touch of elegance. For a kids space, a black chalkboard wall will be a fun and perfect addition.

Mixed metals and the return of gold: We're seeing a lot more gold accents, lighting and knob/drawer pulls than previous years, though silver and pewter tones are still popular. Mixing your metals is a look that works as well!

Open shelves or glass-front cabinets show off beautiful dishware and accessories. This is a popular look in a white kitchen with a monochromatic style.

Pattern and texture: The Moroccan trellis pattern is hugely popular and extremely versatile. From pillows and throws to lighting and backsplash, wallpaper, and carpet, this pattern is everywhere!

Ceiling candy: Lot's of ceiling beams and ornate detailing. In our Dream Homes you'll also find impressive archways and textured ceilings.

Painted Islands: There are a lot of white kitchens on the Parade of Homes and, with a neutral backdrop, many kitchens feature painted islands for pops of color or mix-and-match wood (for instance, white kitchen cabinets combined with a dark-stained wood island)

Upstairs loft spaces are a popular feature among family homes because they can serve as an added media/play room or study area for schoolwork.

Bonus rooms: extra spaces can be converted into a room that fits your lifestyle. Most common are exercise rooms, craft rooms, and basement wine rooms. ■



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BY ANDY LIEN

RENTALS: BRINGING PROPERTY MANAGEMENT HOME TO WORK FOR YOU



Kevin Ortner. Photo courtesy of Renters Warehouse.

The rental market has been on an upswing in the Twin Cities with properties being in demand and rents being on the rise. Plenty of people in this community have been homeowners, but what happens when it's time to move in together and go from two homes to one? Do you sell or do you rent? What if an elder parent needs to move out of their home for assisted living or nursing home care? What can be done with a house if you have to relocate for a job? The answer lies in hiring a property management company.

A friend of mine recently went from managing his own rental to hiring professionals to do it and not only felt a huge weight lift from his shoulders when he learned about what he *wouldn't* have to do any longer, but also felt his wallet expand a little when he learned where the professionals would price his place and how much more he could get for it on a monthly basis. Is hiring a property management company for you? What is there to know about it? I had a chance to do a Q&A with Kevin Ortner, CEO of Renters Warehouse, to learn about how

Renters Warehouse manages properties based on its "4-Step Process" of getting the best price, finding the right tenants, handling the property management, and protecting against the unexpected.

What is Renters Warehouse and what area does it cover?

Kevin Ortner: Renters Warehouse was founded by Brenton Hayden in 2007 and is one of the fastest-growing, most-awarded, and highest-reviewed property management companies in America. We are also proud to be the largest in Minnesota. We manage over 10,000 properties nationwide and our team of professional landlords are dedicated to helping everyday homeowners lease and manage their residential real estate with confidence. We currently boast 28 franchises in over 15 states and growing.

What is included in hiring a property management company? Will I get out of fixing leaky faucets? How about shoveling snow?

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 58 ➔



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faucets; however, the owner will be responsible for the cost of the repairs. We handle all legal paperwork and red tape and we assist with compliance. When necessary, we carry out evictions and enforce leases. Most importantly, we work closely with you to protect your property, 365 days out of the year.

What are the fees and how are they determined?

KO: Our pricing structure is based on the number of units, the length of the leases, and other factors. There are some very basic tables on our website showing the prices for tenant placement (one to two months rent), property management pricing (\$50–80 per month), and curbside protection (\$15–30 per month). Condos and houses are the same as far as fee is concerned, but there is a discount for having multiple units at the same location, up to as many as 50 units in a multi-unit dwelling.

What's the best kind of property for a landlord? Is it just houses, or do condos work?

KO: Single family homes are the most popular, regardless of what type of building it is. The average renter is a family of four. It's not just young adults who aren't ready to commit and who move around a lot. The rental market is changing; everyone enjoys the freedom, but they want the benefits of owning, too.

What happens if I sell the property?

KO: If a person sells a home mid-lease, the homeowner has an opportunity to negotiate with the tenant. It's a matter of breaking the lease. Renters Warehouse can help, but it is ultimately up to the negotiations with the tenant. We find that sales tend to be from property owner to property owner, not breaking any lease. And Renters Warehouse can assist so that people can sell to other investment property owners.

Before you sell, make sure you do the math first. A quick cash-on-cash analysis will tell you whether it really makes financial sense to sell. We offer a free rent vs. sell guidebook to help you assess your personal situation from a financial opportunity standpoint. If selling your home is the right option for you, RW Realty, our sister traditional real estate division, can help you sell and buy a new property.

If I have a home in another state, can Renters Warehouse help me with that?

KO: Of course! Renters Warehouse is the proud owner of 28 franchises in 15 states and counting. We're actively adding additional locations across the country, so even if we're not in your state now, keep

checking back!

Because the GLBT community is a minority group that is not embraced by all Minnesotans, are there ways to protect a home from renters who might be anti-gay? How can this demographic protect itself in renting out its property?

KO: We absolutely abide by the federal fair housing laws, as well as all state and local anti-discrimination laws when connecting homeowners with renters. All real estate advertised by Renters Warehouse is subject to the federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make such preference, limitation or discrimination."

In addition, Renters Warehouse shall not refuse to rent, or discriminate in the terms, conditions or privileges of the tenancy, to any person due to his/her race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, handicap (whether physical or mental), sexual orientation, or family status. Renters Warehouse understands further that local ordinances may include other protected classes.

So, there are protections in place for both the property owners and the prospective tenants that there can be no discrimination based on sexual orientation. After that and our extensive background checking, there's no way to know how someone will behave in their living space. We can't really dig into how people think or feel. We have owners and tenants of all stripes. What Renters Warehouse does offer is to be the buffer between the two. By having a property management company, there is the option of anonymity. The owner may not be known by the tenant and the two might pass each other on the street without having any knowledge. Of course, if the tenant is doing something illegal on the property, having a property management company to enforce the lease is a benefit to the property owner. As the face of the landlord, we would find this out through our random and routine property inspections. And then we can go through the process to remove them from the home. The best background checks in the world are great, but we don't always know what's in their hearts and minds. ■

For more information about Renters Warehouse, go to www.renterswarehouse.com.



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HOME & GARDEN

FALL

BY SHANE LUECK

HOT PROPERTY:



Photos courtesy of Iron River Construction

The trends forecast is in, and “extra room” attic spaces are here to stay. The potential is endless; with the space being converted into a bedroom, family room, or an office, attics allow homeowners the opportunity to customize their home to fit their needs.

When Mandy French and Carol Kratzer bought their home in 2002, the attic was unfinished and they always planned to build out that space at some point, even including it in their overall financial plan. The women worked very closely with their financial advisor and started saving in 2008 to turn it into their master bedroom suite.

By 2013 they were meeting with Iron River Construction for another project and decided to show the space to Tracy Dahlin (the owner and president of Iron River). A few months later, the couple started the initial meetings to get the estimate for the attic remodel. From there, the project was broken into three phases: framing, electrical, plumbing, and windows; foam insulation; and drywall, flooring, paint, plumbing fixtures, tile, tub, and finishing touches.

“Working with clients and creating a relationship is top priority in any remodeling project let alone one of this large size and with this many details,” says Rick Tollerud, senior project manager. “This was our fourth project with Mandy and Carol, so we had a fantastic and very open relationship. Anything and everything was discussed as options.”

Initially the project was forecast to take place over two years to coincide with French and Kratzer’s cash flow and savings plan. With the help of short term financing, the women were able to accelerate the timeline to nine months.

“Our biggest concern was having all these guys come in and out of our house for nine months and our dog Pablo,” French says. “Fortunately, we were able to work from home two days per week and we had doggy day care (aka my uncle who lives a few miles away). Our work/life schedule had to adjust accordingly for that.”

Other concerns around the project were about cost. French and Kratzer know from experience that even when you plan very thoughtfully, unplanned expenditures do occur. Increase in cost of supplies is what impacted the overall cost for this project. Through consistent and honest communication between them and Iron River, the project was able to move ahead without issue.

Even with timeline changes during the course of the project, the couple didn’t experience much negative impact since this was an addition to their existing living space. “We had a bedroom and bathroom downstairs,” French says. “We were purchasing furniture and storing them in our living room and office. It was very exciting once everything was done so we could move it upstairs because we

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62 ➔

MASTER SUITE PANACHE



Photo courtesy of Iron River Construction.



Photo courtesy of Iron River Construction



Photo by Mandy French

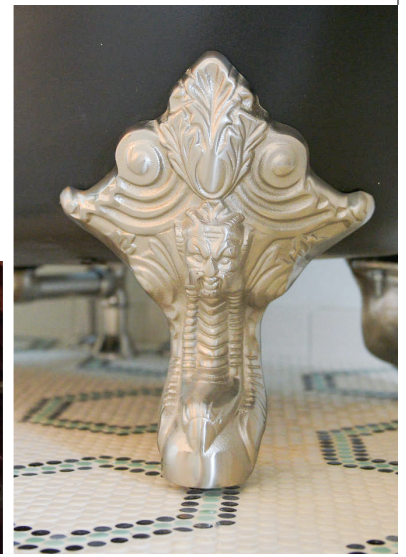


Photo courtesy of Iron River Construction

The round lipless shower design came from their love of traveling and time spent in Mexico

could reclaim space on the main floor as well.”

Staying true to the home was at the heart of the remodel design. With a 1936 Tudor 1.5-story home, the women wanted to stay within that style, have a very open floor plan, and optimize storage space. This included keeping all the angles of the peaks as well as the exposed brick of the fireplace.

For a color palette, the couple wanted to stay very neutral (black and white) and incorporate color with furniture, rugs, art, and other accessories. The color scheme for tile in the bathroom was pulled from the original bathroom on the main floor: black and white with seafoam green accents. Antique sconces were purchased as well as recreated art deco sconces over the sink.

The round lipless shower design came from their love of traveling and time spent in Mexico where they found “all-tile bathrooms that flow into an open shower (no glass door or shower curtain),” French says. Then they included “a stand-alone six-foot-long clawfoot bathtub that was custom painted black on the outside. ‘Go big or go home,’ we said. We definitely splurged a bit on the tub.”

According to Tollerud, the clawfoot tub was an adventure in itself, weighing in at over 500 pounds. “The only way to get it upstairs was to take it out of the crate and physically carry it,” he says. “Keep in mind, it has a finished exterior in black, if we scratched it, any paint touch up would show and not look good. Needless to say, we did not scratch the tub but it did take six guys to get it upstairs with a lot of grunting and sweat!”

The three brick posts were also an intentional design decision that arose out of a necessity for structural support. Not wanting to have a wooden or dry-walled post, the two decided to pull the brick element from their fireplace out into the space and reclaimed Chicago-style brick from their neighbor’s driveway to cover the posts.

With the open floor plan (the curved shower is the only wall in the suite), moisture is not an issue, but of course an exhaust fan was added to assist. Aside from moisture, another concern for French and Kratzer was needing the space to be quiet and energy efficient. “We used solid spray foam insulation for the entire attic space,” Tollerud says. “This, indeed, has created a quiet and warm space to enjoy.”

According to French, this project has exceeded all expectations. “We loved watching our dream and plan come to life,” she says. “It was a very collaborative relationship which was very important to us considering we were spending a pretty large sum of money and it’s our house which we already love.”

The one lesson that French learned through this process is patience pays off, and gives one piece of advice to anyone else seeking to remodel: know your requirements and stay true to yourself and your home.

“Be flexible with your time and the timeline,” she says. “Be aware that there are things out of your control that will change the plans including city code/ordinances and structural limitations. Be open during the design phase — if you don’t like something, speak up; if you really like something, speak up. And make sure you and your partner are aligned on things before meeting with the designer. You don’t want to spend 30 minutes arguing when you can be moving forward with decisions (designer’s time is valuable!). If you need a tie breaker that’s what your designer is for.”

Tollerud offers similar advice. He says to do your research and make sure you build a strong relationship with your general contractor. “You will be working closely together and nothing can be held back,” he says. “It must be very open and honest communication. Without that, you will not have a successful project.”

In order to have that trust and communication with your contractor, Dahlin suggests treating your initial conversation as an interview rather than an estimate, as prices should all be in the same range. For example, are they licensed and do they appear organized, ask pertinent questions about your project, and listen well?

One important question to ask them is how long the contractor has been in business. According to Dahlin, most companies (remodelers included), fail within five years, and you want someone to answer the phone in the future if there’s a problem.

Aside from being in business for just a short while, Dahlin notes some other warning signs, such as a contractor that is unlicensed, hard to get a hold of, asks you to pull the permit, uses unmarked vehicles, or will not work with signed contracts. If that doesn’t throw you off, be on the lookout for a contractor with no physical address or who uses vague contracts (such as new kitchen counters, cabinets, and flooring for \$20,000 with no specifications as to materials, sizes, areas, or scheduling).

As for French and Kratzer, their remodel plans are never quite complete. With a kitchen project dreamed up for the future, they are basking in their new master bedroom. “Our family and friends love the space,” French says. “There is a waiting list to come over and use the tub and shower. We get asked, ‘When are you going out of town again? We’ll house sit for you.’” ■

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2016 Fiat 500X



Remember that rainbow-striped vehicle that appeared in *Lavender* magazine right after Twin Cities Pride? You know, the orange one that followed the women's motorcycle contingent in Detroit's Motor City Pride parade? Yes, *that one!*

Well, there is one bit of truth to be told about that rainbow-striped car: it's part of a plot by the Fiat brand to love us.

Yes, Fiat. The Italian brand that sells a cute little hatchback (500), its mean little brother (Abarth), and that wagon (500L) that looks like both of them. You see, the one thing I forgot to report from my trip to Motor City Pride was how Fiat wanted to reach out to the GLBT community as being the preferred brand of choice. They want us to drive 500s, Abarths, and 500Ls instead of Subarus and Mitsubishis.

Perhaps there is some argument for this rationale. Fiats are fashionable, fun, and European. They are also part of a company that truly backs up their support of our community

through their work with their employees and beyond. Since we care about both aspects in an automobile, it seems that they are on the right track in wooing for our business.

While the 500, Abarth, and 500L are fine, there seems to be something missing in the Fiat lineup. Considering that most consumers these days are looking at crossovers, maybe there is something Fiat could offer us in one of those — perhaps a “cute ute.”

This is why the 2016 Fiat 500X was the “grand marshal” of the Motor City Pride parade. It represents something we might actually want to buy.

When we received our 500X, we were a bit let down. It was not in that orange color that I saw in Detroit. Nor did it sport its rainbow striping and lettering. It was simply plain. Ordinary. Mundane. Moreover, it has a name: Bianco Gelato.

This non-parade car is really a looker in its own right. The shape is inspired by the little

Cinquecento, which in itself is inspired by the original 1957 minicar that put many Italians back behind the wheel. The basic shape was super-sized to cover a platform that already spawned the also new Jeep Renegade. This marks the first real crossover developed by Fiat, but it is by no means the first to drive all four wheels. Also underpinning the 500X is a vehicle that inspired the Renegade: the Fiat Panda 4X4. Since the 1980s, Italian farmers found that the little Panda was able to run through fields, ford creeks, and tackle rocky terrain just like one of those Subaru wagons of yore.

Being stretched out on a larger platform, there were some considerations to adapt the 500's style on the new crossover. The front end was widened with a longer hood area and a much larger roofline to accommodate four doors. The 500X ends with more inspiration from the smaller two-door hatch. The ground clearance is 7.9 inches, which makes for a good height to deal with snow in the winter. This

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Easy model wears 17-inch aluminum wheels with Nexen tires.

Inside offers more continuity with both the 500 and 500L, though the instrument panel has an appliqué matching the body color, just like the smaller 500. The instrument binnacle has three large dials, the center being a TFT screen that reads out everything from vehicle, trip, and fuel economy data. The gas and temperature gauges flank the center dial, with the speedometer and tachometer with their own dial off to the side. Up in the middle of the center stack is the touchscreen housing the UConnect screen, whereas climate controls and multimedia connections are down below toward the console. One new touch on the 500X is the push button ignition, something of an influence from the Chrysler side of the FCA house.

Seating is on the firm side, but they are really big chairs from which to command the road. The Easy model wears durable cloth that is OK to the touch. There is some bolstering to lock in most bodies, but taller folks may have to find some additional comfort behind the wheel. There is plenty of room for front occupants, but rear space is OK. Average-sized bodies will be fine in the rear seat. Cargo space is quite decent with 18.5 cubic feet behind the rear seats,

expanding to 50.5 cubic feet overall. The slope of the rear window would prevent very tall items to be carried properly, however a panel could be removed for more depth by about a few inches.

Two engines power the 500X. Fiat's 1.4-liter Multiair turbocharged four-cylinder is usually found on the lower priced Pop model, connected to a six-speed manual transmission. This Easy model came equipped with the Chrysler-sourced 2.4-liter Multiair II four-cylinder engine with 180 horsepower and 175 pound-feet of torque on tap. A nine-speed automatic was attached to this engine, sending power to an all-wheel drive system. Performance is sluggish in the low gears, but it will work itself out at speed. It does get noisy at those lower gears, though the 500X is not exactly serene at highway speeds.

The 500X could be one of the better driving vehicles of its type with better stability through the curves and on the road. The ride is well-dampened, absorbing the rough parts well. Gravel driving yields plenty of ground noise, but the 500X is stable on this type of surface. Dirt roads should be just fine for the 500X.

A thick steering wheel helps rudder a good and precise steering system. On-center feel is

fine and the system reacts well to the wheel with solid feel on the road. Brakes are very good with solid and quick stops in normal and panic situations.


The 500X is promising good fuel economy for its class, as it will be one of the biggest selling points for any subcompact crossover. The EPA states that this particular 500X will get 21MPG in the city, 30MPG on the highway. It should be fine for fuel economy overall.

The base Pop model starts out at \$20,000. To step up to the Easy, as equipped with dual pane moonroof, navigation and a few extras, it would cost you \$27,200. Keep in mind there are three other models above the Easy: the Lounge, Trekking, and Trekking Plus.

For being a "grand marshal" of a Pride parade, the new Fiat 500X has accomplished a potential connection to our demographic. It is different, cheeky, and useful. Its style alone is worth the look. Oh, and don't forget, it's *European...wait, Italian!*

Perhaps Fiat has us figured out. Since we supposedly like to be stylish, we would mostly likely be a perfect customer for their vehicles. The 500X is closer to what we might be looking for in these parts: something that could get us through all seasons while looking, well, fabulous. ■

by SHARR WHITE
ANNAPURNA
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Dog Days

Earlier this week, I sent my three dogs to a two-week obedience boot camp. Since they are my dogs, it goes without saying that they have never in their lives been disciplined. So, they were understandably confused when my local dog trainer — whose eerie command over the canine world has turned him into a type of messianic cult figure in my town — came to collect them for sleep-away camp and immediately began barking orders at them.

Livia, my female miniature schnauzer, and Nettie, my French bulldog, quickly fell under his spell and eagerly followed him into his truck — a pair of willing devotees, happily awaiting orders to kill on his command. But Fredo, my male schnauzer who was once ejected from puppy school for lifting his leg on the instructor one too many times, rooted himself at my side and refused to budge. He had to be carried, kicking and squealing, into the truck. Then, as the truck pulled out of my driveway, he stared directly into my soul, his eyes filled with equal measures of terror and betrayal.

As I weakly waved goodbye, the tears started, and didn't stop until I lulled myself to sleep with a medicinal bottle of cabernet.

I awoke the next morning, dog-less for the

first time in years. I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror, my face swollen from a night of weeping and my lips stained from the wine. "So, this is what I look like when I'm in love," I said to my reflection.

Regular readers of this column (are there any?) know that earlier this year I reconnected with the great love of my life after a 25-year absence. From the moment we reunited, we entered into an impenetrable bubble of enchantment that protected us from any threat to our supreme bliss.

There were no clouds on the horizon! But, then, on the first evening she spent at my house, a small storm began to shape in the distance. As we made our way into my bedroom, we were followed by my tiny pack of ill-mannered beasts. They hopped into bed and quickly formed a dog-wall between us.

"The dogs sleep with us?" she asked, clearly nonplussed by the arrangement.

"Ummm, yeah?" I said, carefully.

This led to our first uncomfortable standoff, with her silently demanding that I order the dogs off the bed, and me internally screaming: "Of course they sleep with me! Where else would they sleep?"

I blinked first.

I very reluctantly led the dogs out of the bedroom and cordoned them off. They howled relentlessly in disbelief and I pouted. Finally, I got out of bed and joined them in solidarity. We spent the night crammed onto a day bed, the dogs sleeping fitfully while I wrestled with my options.

I have a long history of refusing to make sacrifices in relationships. This may explain my stunningly impressive failure rate in this arena. And I certainly had never even considered putting a partner's needs before my pets' smallest desires.

I looked down at the dogs, snoring, drooling, and snuffling at my side. Normally I would find this charming. But, suddenly, it dawned on me that I had chosen to sleep in a cot with these disgusting brutes instead of with my nice, clean girlfriend in a big bed with 500-count Egyptian cotton sheets. I slipped out of the room, and crawled back into bed, making a graceful reentry into the happiest relationship of my life.

When I told my girlfriend that the dogs had been shipped off for obedience school, she nodded in approval. Then she asked, "When do you get trained?"

"I think it's started already," I said. ■



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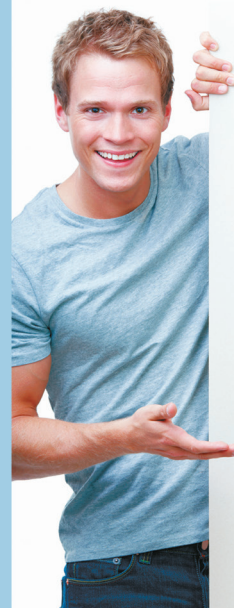


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ADVERTISER INDEX

Adult

MegaMates.....69
Squirt - PressNet, Inc.....69

Arts & Entertainment

Hennepin Theatre Trust.....21
Jungle Theater.....66
Radio K 770.....49
Stonewall Movie.....58

Automotive

Barton Volvo.....65
Fiat Minneapolis.....5
Kline Nissan.....17
LaMetty's Collision.....29
Morrie's Brooklyn Park Subaru.....17
Carousel Porsche.....25
Rosedale Chevrolet.....63
Sears Imported Autos.....16
White Bear Mitsubishi.....7

Bars & Nightlife

19 Bar.....40
Gay 90's.....41
Union Rooftop, Union Bar & Grill, Rev Lounge.....18, 67

Beauty & Relaxation

Good Look Ink.....4

Beverages

Lowry Hill Liquors, Lakeside Wine & Spirits.....29

Business Services

The Minnehaha Mile.....31

Dating Services

Elite Private Search.....37

Event Venues & Services

D'Amico & Partners.....27

Events

Bingo A Go Go.....21
Junk Bonanza.....15
Lavender's First Thursdays.....31, 55
Lavender's Score Thursdays.....23
Midwest Home Show.....47
Mpls.St.Paul Magazine.....23

Financial

Edward Jones.....19
ROR Tax Professionals.....15
Wells Fargo Bank.....11

Floral & Garden

Dale Green Co.....55

Gifts

Fantasy Gifts.....41

Grocery Stores

Mississippi Market.....14

Health & Wellness

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota.....10
Boulevard Chiropractic.....29
Burns, Steve.....11
Emily Program.....14
HCMC.....9
Mill District Dental.....29
The Balancing Act.....51
University of Minnesota, Infectious Diseases.....75

Home Furnishings & Accessories

FrameWorthy.....9
Furniture and Things.....63
Little Blind Spot.....47
Plants and Things.....63
Habitation Furniture + Design.....3

Home Services

AAA Movers.....43
American Glass & Mirror.....49
C.A.P. Carpet & Flooring.....49
Garlock-French Roofing.....13
Hirshfield's.....43
House Lift Remodeler.....51
Ispiri.....53
Metro Heating & Cooling.....45
Minnesota Exteriors Inc.....53
Pride Custom Painting.....63
Quarve Contracting Inc.....51
Seastedt's.....45
Sheller.....49
Soderlin Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning.....45
Twin Cities Closet Co.....43
Vujovich Design Build.....59

Insurance

Bartell, Dawn.....10
Horizon Agency.....65

Jewelry

Haff Jewelry.....17
JB Hudson Jewelers.....13
Max's.....29
Scheherazade Jewelers.....27
Shane Co.....2
Wedding Day Diamonds.....9

Legal

Cloutier Law Offices.....21
Helitzer & Houghtaling.....17
Jerry Burg, Attorney at Law.....31
Johnson, Randall.....58
Moshier, Becky.....11
Robichaud & Alcantara, P.A.....15

Malls & Shopping Centers

Shops at West End, The.....16

Media & Communications

AM950 Radio.....51

Mortgage

First Equity Mortgage.....37
Alerus Mortgage.....21

Organizations

The Aliveness Project.....68
Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly.....13

Real Estate & Rentals

Donavon Keeney.....10
Loring Park Apartments.....6
One Ten Grant Apartments.....55
Parade of Homes.....76
Premier Management.....23
Renters Warehouse.....57
Doreen Yaggie-Edina Realty.....43

Restaurants

Burger Moe's.....27
Crooners Lounge and Supper Club.....25
Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta.....27
Melting Pot, The.....25
Wilde Roast Cafe.....27

Sports & Recreation

Premier Pool & Spa.....47

Travel & Accommodations

Water Street Inn.....19



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Roommate

An empty lecture hall in the middle of the night. I'm on my back; he's on top of me. Kissing hard. Loving rough. I'm wrapped around him, running my fingers through his hair.

Until my head falls off my hand and I jerk out of a dream. Economics 110 materializes.

A girl sitting beside me pokes me. "Hey," she whispers. "You were sleeping."

No shit. I stand up and leave.

It's just after Labor Day in Chapel Hill, in the days when summer folds into fall. I've been a freshman at the University of North Carolina for a month and a half and have known my roommate for just as long, paired at random by the university. We've already experienced so much together, not the least of which includes him witnessing me cut through the hearts of three different men. I was better looking then, gorgeous even, or so he's said. He's paid me such compliments despite him knowing that I'm gay and despite him being straight. Maybe this soft attention draws me to him; I'm excruciatingly infatuated.

He is the perfect roommate. His side of our dorm room is messy, not dirty; he's liberal, a brilliant student, an avid reader, and collegiate-level athlete. Together we venture to pre-rush frat parties, where boys meet friends and flirt platonically, where I fish the girls for him and he fishes boys of questionable sexuality for me. We do our laundry together, study together, and eat together. We already have inside jokes, and from day one we've known what a necktie on the door handle means.

Today he is teaching me how to play Frisbee on the quad outside our dorm. The lawn

is full and soft beneath my bare feet; the fragrance of late-summer blossoms fills the wind. Boys from our residence hall are playing catch with a football outside a neighboring all-girls dorm. The quiet boy who lives alone in a room down from our own is practicing guitar on our stoop, and a girl on a picnic blanket across the way is sketching him; I wonder if he knows.

I have a date tomorrow with someone who's asked to give me a primer in Ultimate Frisbee. I don't want to embarrass myself, so my roommate agreed to provide me with a tutorial.

"You must like this dude, whoever he is," he says and slaps my shoulder. "I mean, *you* learning a sport for a man? Who would have guessed?"

"You are *such* a jerk."

Mark probes me about the upcoming date — where, when, what the guy looks like ("you think he's cute?"), on and on. He grills me about every man I've met; to an outsider you'd think he was jealous, but his over-protectiveness is more a brotherly love, though certainly still heartbreakingly teasing.

Mark takes the Frisbee and tucks it between my palm and wrist. "Hold it like this and then just flick it away." He rehearses the motion with his hand over mine.

Two hours later Mark and I are in our dorm room. I'm on my bed studying for a math exam. He's playing a basketball game on his Xbox, occasionally lending his voice to a mute version of a virtual Roy Williams. A cool breeze pours in from our windows.

"Yo, JJ," he says when a loading screen pops up on our television. I look up from my

textbook. "You did pretty good today. I mean, don't get me wrong, you still suck. But overall? Better than expected."

I throw a pillow at his face and return to my book.

We're quiet for a while. Mark finishes his game and climbs up onto his desk and into his lofted bed; I finish reading and drop out of mine to switch off the lights.

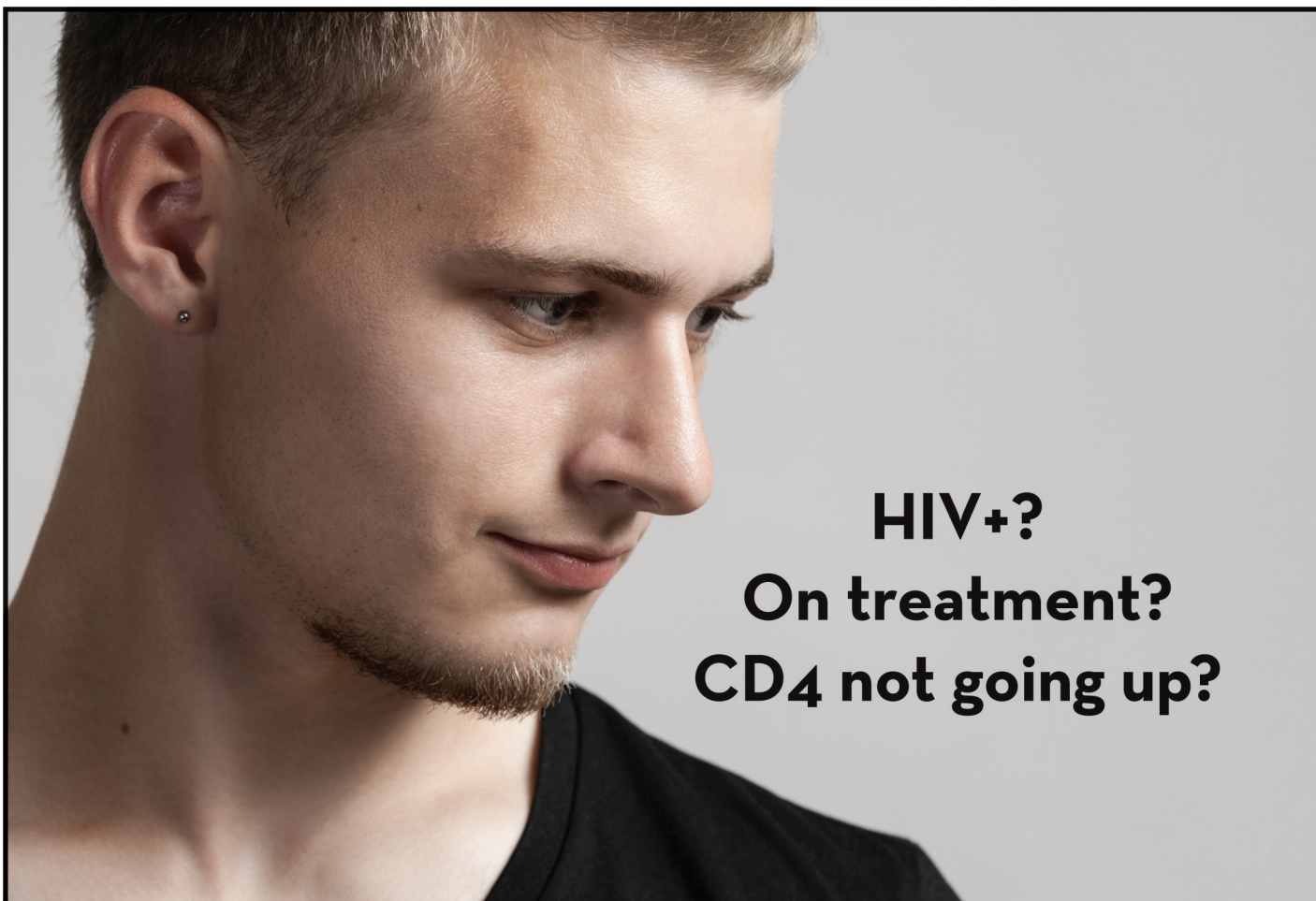
"Hey," he says in the dark. "The dude you're gonna see. He's lucky."

Mark says these sweet things sometimes; he provides me too many compliments. They're agonizing and I never know how to respond. Maybe they're his way of telling me he loves me, but boys our age are overly affectionate anyway and I can't decipher his intent. I'd like to confess my attraction to him, but doing so would ruin our relationship. Even if he did feel the same, he'd never admit it — experimental boys our age never directly address the elephants. He'd freeze up if I told him, tell me in response that he loved me like a brother, then distance himself from me, pull back on his flirty teasing, change the way he acted in hopes that my crush would stale. I've decided that if his compliments do originate from something more than a brotherly love, he bears the burden of telling me — after all, he maintains he's the straight one.

I climb into my bed and lie in silent torment.

Back to the lecture hall. ■

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